

For Immediate Release: December 02, 2008

Contact: Val Rickert
802-828-4242

Additional Unemployment Benefits Available

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Jim Douglas and Labor Commissioner Patricia Moulton Powden announced today that the Vermont Department of Labor has begun to notify individuals potentially eligible for the second round of Emergency Unemployment Compensation this week.

Last week President Bush signed legislation that expanded the emergency program. The original program provided up to 13 weeks of additional benefits. Now individuals may qualify for up to 20 weeks of benefits.

“This extension comes at a critical time for many Vermonters who are working to transition to new jobs,” commented Governor Douglas. “In economic slowdowns, it often takes longer to find work,” said Commissioner Powden. “The additional benefits will give unemployed workers additional assistance up to 7 more weeks.”

Eligibility

Emergency benefits will be available to individuals who have exhausted all regular unemployment benefits. Qualifying individuals will continue to be eligible for up to 20 additional weeks provided they do not become eligible for regular benefits.

In addition to having exhausted state benefits, a worker must have worked 20 weeks in full-time covered employment or earned the equivalent in insured wages to qualify for extended benefits. Individuals found eligible for emergency benefits will be paid the same weekly benefit amount as previously paid under the state program. Emergency unemployment compensation will cease on August 27, 2009.

How to Apply

Individuals who are currently receiving emergency unemployment need not do anything. The Unemployment Insurance Division will adjust their account.

Individuals who have used all of the initial 13 weeks of emergency benefits were just mailed a notice telling them when to call the claim center to apply for benefits. The date to call is being assigned to help prevent wait times.

-more-

Financing

The benefit and administrative costs of emergency benefits is paid for from funds appropriated from the Federal Unemployment Trust Fund.